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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS, AF SE NATSIOS
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL KPKO SOCI AU UNSC SU
SUBJECT: BASHIR DENIES SUDAN IS DELAYING UNAMID DEPLOYMENT; BLAMES
UN

¶1. (SBU) Summary: President Bashir denied that Sudan was delaying UNAMID troop deployment and blamed any delays on the UN. He stated that Nordic troops are not acceptable and questioned the necessity of deploying Thai and Nepalese troops. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) According to local media reports, in press statements November 23 following the NCP's annual congress President Bashir denied accusations that he was delaying the deployment of the United Nations - African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) peacekeeping force. Arabic language newspapers quoted Bashir accusing "Washington and London of delaying the hybrid operations." Bashir continued, "The ones who are hindering the process are those who are trying to impose their agenda on us. If there is any delay in the issue, it is from the United Nations and those who are standing behind the UN."

¶3. (SBU) Bashir defended his actions saying the Government of Sudan (GOS) approved the deployment of battalions from Pakistan, China, and Egypt "but after the expiration of the deadline for troop offers, the UN sought to bring troops from Thailand, Sweden and Norway." He said he could not agree to this, pointing out that the original agreement with the AU and UN was for a force made up of African troops, backed up with logistical and technical units from the UN.

¶4. (SBU) The "Swedish and Norwegian troops are not acceptable. We shall not accept them," said Bashir according to media sources. Speaking about a proposed Thai battalion, Bashir said, "Even if there is a shortage of troops from the African continent, we are not going to accept these people, because we were not consulted about it."

¶5. (SBU) Comment: It is unlikely that President Bashir will ever accept the Norwegian/Swedish company given his own consistent and very public messages that they are not acceptable. He and others in the NCP have posed legalistic obstacles to the deployment of the Nepalese and Thai troops, though previously MFA Under-Secretary Mutriff Siddiq and NISS Director Saleh Ghosh have said privately that the GOS was not totally opposed to these troops, but that "they could come later" after the bulk of African troops have arrived. As we have pointed out previously and repeatedly, the GOS will use and manipulate any ambiguity and fissure in the UNSC resolution to hollow out the force while trumpeting loudly its adherence to UNSCR ¶1769. None of these troops are in and of themselves a major component of the force, but the endless Sudanese bickering on issues large and small, while doing just enough to plausibly deny outright obstruction, could in the end produce a hollowed out, shadow force incapable of fulfilling its mandate. End comment.

FERNANDEZ